



100 Years of Service



A CENTURY OF COMMITMENT
GO YE THEREFORE

Celebrating 100 years of Service
1879--1979

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

The Louisiana Conference United Methodist Women
are grateful to

Mrs. G. W. Charlton, Writer
Mrs. John G. Cooke, Jr., Researcher
Mrs. Wiley B. Gardner, Researcher
Mrs. Ethel F. Burgess, Typist

for this Historical Booklet.

We are grateful to Ms. Oddette Rickett and Mrs.
Diana Burke for the emblem on the Cover.

CONFERENCE LEADERS
1879--1979

Woman's Foreign Missionary Society
1879--1890

Mrs. W. M. Reade

Mrs. T. P. Fullilove

Woman's Home Missionary Society
Methodist Episcopal Church
1881--1940

Mrs. Ida Lange

Mrs. Willie B. Boyd

Mrs. Amelia Turner

Mrs. Lurenia C. Eckley

Woman's Parsonage and Home Mission Society
1891--1900

Mrs. F. A. Lyons

Mrs. E. R. Kennedy

Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society
1900--1911

Mrs. W. H. LaPrade

Mrs. S. A. Montgomery

Woman's Missionary Society
1911--1940

Mrs. Abel Bliss

Mrs. C. F. Niebergall

Mrs. S. M. Collins

Mrs. V. H. Spinks

Mrs. George Sexton, Jr.

Woman's Society of Christian Service
1940--1968

Mrs. J. W. E. Bowen, Jr.	Mrs. J. B. Pollard
Mrs. George Carter, Jr.	Mrs. Glenn Laskey
Mrs. Inez Chrisentery	Mrs. C. I. Jones
Mrs. Maude P. Harris	Mrs. L. B. Kilpatrick
Mrs. Beulah Williams	Mrs. G. W. Dameron
Mrs. Arthur Lundy	

Wesleyan Service Guild
1940--1972

Mrs. Hugh Hoff	Miss Mildred Evans
Mrs. W. R. Simmons	Mrs. Gloria Bennett
Miss Grace Lawson	Mrs. E. Lyons Baker
Miss Mary G. Page	Mrs. Owinda Taplette
Mrs. Minza Rabun	Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson
Miss Sue Batton	Mrs. Mary M. Bell
Miss Arline Tyler	Mrs. Mary Helen Leslie

Women's Society of Christian Service
1968--1972

Mrs. Charles B. McGowan	Miss Ethel Alston
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United Methodist Women
1972

Mrs. T. E. Kirkpatrick	Mrs. Robert Compton
Mrs. Truman L. Ward	

Woman's Division President

Mrs. Glenn Laskey

Jurisdiction Presidents

Mrs. J. W. E. Bowen, Jr.
Mrs. George Sexton, Jr.
Mrs. George Carter, Jr.

1879--1881

Methodism was hardly known in Louisiana until after 1800. The first Protestant house of worship known as Axley Chapel was completed in Catahoula Parish near Catahoula Lake in 1808.

For some years Louisiana was a part of the Mississippi Conference and it was not until 1846 that the General Conference authorized the forming of the Louisiana Conference, the first session having been held in January, 1847 in Opelousas.

Women of Methodism were anxious to form an organization that would mean greater service to their church, their community and to those less fortunate the world over. In the Baton Rouge home of Mrs. W. M. Reade in 1879 that organization was formed. (Known as the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, there were no records for the ensuing years until 1883 when reorganization took place. During that year eight auxiliaries were formed with one hundred ninety-six members. The first annual meeting of the WFMS after that reorganization was held in Mansfield June 7-9, 1884.)

At the second annual meeting in 1885 a juvenile society was formed and in 1886 the meeting was held in Mansfield. At that time the district secretary was given the responsibility of traveling throughout the district in helping to organize adult and juvenile societies. A quote from that time shows the importance of the duties of the district secretary: "Some district secretaries have been hindered from any activity by family affliction. No officer bears so much responsibility as the district secretary. Should she organize and visit, and write and exhort and pray as she must, this artery would feed the smaller veins, and the whole body would glow with strength and vigor, now unknown".

As an Auxiliary to the Louisiana Conference,

the fourth annual meeting was held in Ruston, Louisiana in 1887. The treasurer reported an increase of \$116.60 from the previous year. The committee on finance recommended that the necessary expense of each society be met by a contingent fund, to avoid drawing from the dues of the society. Quoting the Committee: "We recommend a system of self-denial in small things, in the kitchen, the parlor, the bedroom or even the flower garden. Surely we can deny ourselves to the amount of 5 cents a month". The committee also recommended that the district treasurer of each Auxiliary be constituted to go around and collect the dues each month.

In 1888 the Conference meeting was in Alexandria, at which time the contingent fund was discussed. It was decided that each adult member be levied 25¢ and juveniles 15¢. An increase of \$400.00 from the Conference was reported by the treasurer.

During these early years black women of Methodism were interested in meeting together, to witness and to talk of organization. John Wesley, a strong opponent of slavery, baptized the slaves. In New York City at a meeting of the first Methodist Society a black servant girl was one of the five members. Black women had spread the gospel and organized as best they could even before the 1879 organization of their white sisters. In 1866 the Methodist Episcopal Church launched the Freedman's Aid Society for the purpose of elevating the dignity of the blacks and providing educational, social and spiritual assistance to former slaves. In 1880 the Woman's Home Mission Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was chartered with the wife of the President of the United States, Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes, as coordinator. A first priority of the Woman's Home Mission Society was education for black girls, which included training of the hand, the head and

the heart. The efforts of the group continued, grew and developed as the years passed.

Delhi, Louisiana was the meeting place of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society in 1889. At that time a number of resolutions concerning the work of the WFMS were passed.

Baton Rouge, home of the founder of the Society, was the meeting place on June 27, 1890. The collection at that meeting was \$50.50. Word came from Mansfield that their society had mis-understood the time of the convention and no delegates were sent.

1891--1900

During the 1891 meeting in Shreveport the necessity of publishing the minutes of each convention was discussed, and it was noted that these minutes be given as wide distribution as possible. The committee on finance offered a resolution that the special collection for the conference contingent fund be dispensed and that 10% of all funds remitted be set aside for the necessary expense of the executive committee. Another resolution concerning extension work read as follows: "Every district secretary should hold a district meeting sometime during the year and each society should send a delegate to same".

An important event which took place in 1881 was the organization of the Woman's Parsonage and Home Mission Society with Mrs. F. A. Lyons of New Orleans as president.

At that time interested women and juveniles were subscribing to the Woman's Missionary Advance and the Little Worker. However, the number of subscriptions fell short of what the leaders thought to be adequate.

During this period of years the women worked diligently to make their organizations effective. But there were handicaps which were

difficult to overcome such as impassable roads, poor communication and lack of funds.

Concerning the monetary situation Mrs. T. P. Fullilove said: "Aggregated wealth of the church members in 1895 is estimated at \$1,300,000,000. Of this \$5,500,000 was given to Home Missions, \$5,000,000 to Foreign Missions, while more than a billion was expended for tobacco, 50 million for intoxicating drink, 22 million for the needless, inelegant indulgence Chewing Gum and 400 million for amusements".

From Reports of the Annual Conference we find that the Conference pledged to raise \$200.00 above the dues (pledges) as part of the \$10,000 for the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions.

In addition to the deterrent factors already mentioned, crime was increasing during this period. Two cases which made headlines in wide areas were those of Jack the Ripper of London and Lizzie Borden of Fall River, Mass. Although Lizzie was acquitted of having killed her mother and father the case was a controversial one and a familiar refrain echoed:

"Lizzie Borden took an axe
and gave her mother forty whacks.
When she saw what she had done,
she gave her father forty-one."

One bright spot on the horizon was that forensic science took a leap in the late 80's when Professor LaCassagne of the University of Lyons was able to identify a corpse taken from the River Rhone, and was also able to name the killers.

Rail tracks were crossing the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The telephone system was here to stay and communication was to have an influence on the way of life.

Near the closing years of the 19th Century there was some discussion as to the feasibility of putting all the women's work into one organi-

zation but nothing was done to consummate such a plan. There were those who thought that a united group would be stronger while others preferred the status quo. However, they faced the new century with optimism and determination that whatever might come they would remain dedicated workers for the Lord.

1900--1910

A new century is always faced with varying reactions, the optimistic have high hopes, the less optimistic are uncertain and the indifferent give it little thought. However, it is unlikely that women of Methodism could have been placed in either category. They were expanding their services and planning for greater endeavors in the future.

Two groups were still functioning, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and the Woman's Home Mission Society. Although there was more talk of a merger than before, many were not willing to recognize it as a possibility.

Memberships had grown and in 1901 the WFMS had 747 members while the WHMS had 861 members. By 1910 those numbers had grown with the WFMS having 806 members and the WHMS boasting 1,863 members.

The services of the two groups were expanding. According to records, prayer meetings and Bible readings were held. Visits to the sick, strangers and benevolent institutions were the order of the day. Scholarships were given by the Foreign Missionary group to faraway places such as China, Mexico and Korea. One missionary was working in China, one in Brazil.

In 1905 the WHMS distributed 1418 garments for the needy and three parsonages were helped.

Mrs. F. A. Lyons reported on "Press work" to the Annual Conference. "Press work. - One of the most remarkable developments in connection

with the Woman's Home Mission Society has been the work done by the Press Department. The aim of this department is to awaken interest in mission work by spreading information, not only in the auxiliaries, but through the church organ and secular papers. While the women approached this work with great timidity, the last year 13 papers in the state have been furnished weekly items of Home Mission news, and in Ruston the Woman's Home Mission Society is maintaining a monthly paper of their own with such a degree of success that they hope to raise the debt on the church from its proceeds".

In 1906 it was reported that the Woman's Home Mission Society wanted to pay the salary of a city missionary in New Orleans to minister to the sick in soul and body in the factory district. They were hoping to secure subscriptions totaling \$100 a month in order to secure a trained worker and inaugurate several departments of settlement work.

The black women of Methodism wanted to be effective in their desire for service but their opportunities were severely limited. Miss Susan Collins, the daughter of a freedman, was the first black missionary appointed by the WFMS to serve in Liberia with Bishop Taylor. The second black missionary was Miss Martha Drummer who joined Miss Collins in 1906 and retired in 1923. Miss Anna E. Hall who was not a missionary should be mentioned as the first black graduate deaconess of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Plans for merger of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and the Woman's Home Mission Society were being made on a definite basis and as the first decade of the New Century passed the merger was a certainty.

1910--1920

In 1910 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South declared that the Woman's Home Mission Society would no longer exist as a separate organization. The Woman's

Missionary Society was formed by the merger of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and the Woman's Home Mission Society.

Constitution and bylaws were set up at the first annual meeting of the Woman's Missionary Council at St. John's Methodist Church in St. Louis, Missouri in May 1911. At that time the Council made the following statement: "Union of the two departments of missionary work Home and Foreign cannot be forced upon any auxiliary or conference, but it is heartedly recommended...membership dues will be 10¢ to either or 20¢ to both."

1912 will be remembered as the year when the Mississippi's flooding caused the second annual meeting of the Woman's Missionary Society to be postponed until late in June.

The June meeting was held in Natchitoches when reports were made from missionaries from Brazil and Old Mexico and from the deaconess who was going to Houma in the French Mission.

The following resolution was passed concerning the Child Labor Law: "The Missionary Society of the Louisiana Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, numbering 2,000 women in conference, assembled at Natchitoches, respectfully memorialize the Legislature of Louisiana to preserve intact the present Child Labor Law, believing that the Clinton bill will revive the most pernicious form of child labor and will weaken the movement for the conservation of our child life".

Members were also urged to form study classes in all auxiliaries and make use of the press, especially the church papers, which included "Missionary Voice", "Young Christian Worker", "King's Messenger" and "The New Orleans Christian Advocate".

The 1913 annual meeting was held in Baton Rouge and since the Woman's Missionary Society was vitally interested in social concerns, as

The Methodist Church has always been, another resolution was drafted. It read: Polygamy (Mormons in Utah) "Be it resolved that the Woman's Missionary Society of the Louisiana Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in annual session assembled in Baton Rouge March 13, 1913, request our legislators to petition the Congress of the U. S. to amend the Constitution so as to place the control of polygamous relations under Federal Enactment".

The president's message at that time was for increased membership, "doubled prayer life" and more societies uniting into one.

During the years of 1914 and 1915 few records were available but adult membership at that time was listed as follows:

1914:	141 auxiliaries	3,498 members
1915:	183 auxiliaries	4,084 members

Ruston was the meeting place for the sixth annual meeting in 1916. At that time the president's report read: "Everything that is great in life is the product of slow growth; the slower its growth, the surer is the lasting success". She also urged cooperation between the Woman's Missionary Society and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. She asked that resolutions be sent, asking for National Constitutional Prohibition to be signed at all public meetings and these petitions be forwarded to Senators and Representatives in Washington.

The Conference pledge for 1917 was \$5,450. Women were urged to pay their pledges in full by Harvest Day, December first. Emphasis was also placed on the observance of Week of Prayer.

First Church of Shreveport was the meeting place for the eighth annual conference which was held February 25-28, 1918. At that time Methodist women had rallied to the call for service to do their part to help win World War I. They made bandages, cooked doughnuts, cookies and made sandwiches, which they took to the railway

stations where the trains carrying the men in service came through. There were those who felt that women of the Church should set aside all church duties to devote every effort toward helping to bring the war to a speedy close. However, the decision was made that it was the Christian duty of women to carry on with their efforts in the church and to serve their country as well.

Peace came in 1918 and that year the ninth annual conference was held in Mansfield. The goal for the year was "Rally the membership year". The conference pledge was \$9,575.

Three great teachings of the moment were emphasized - Intercession, Stewardship and Life Service.

The report of the Committee on Periodicals read: "Much printed propaganda is being circulated now by organized forces of evil; our children are reading it when we or they least expect it. Our church papers set themselves to contradict and offset these influences".

A war was over and another decade had passed. What the next ten years would bring remained to be seen.

1920--1930

The 1920's have often been referred to as the "Roarin' 20's". World War I was over, excitement reigned and the style of women's clothes became extreme. The Charleston was born and young and old alike took part. However, women of Methodism were far more interested in accomplishment than in the styles and fads.

The goal for 1920 was "Year of Evangelism" and at the tenth annual conference in Lake Charles a budget of \$25,000 was adopted. Through the Woman's Missionary Society members were given the opportunity to develop and enrich their own lives and at the same time engage in world-wide humanitarian service.

The outreach during these years was outstand-

ing. St. Mark's Hall in New Orleans, a project of the Society, was a character-building institution where vocational classes, clinics, sewing classes and Bible study were held. The purpose of the center was to give the people of the community a well-rounded life, developing them physically, mentally and spiritually.

The Mary Werlein Mission was in a disadvantaged section of New Orleans and was similar to a rescue mission where relief of all sorts was given to the unfortunate.

French mission work was founded in Houma, Louisiana. In the beginning there were seven persons living in the MacDonnell Wesley House who were given religious training and educational opportunities.

The following resolution was passed during the 1921 meeting in Baton Rouge: Resolution Pertaining to Interdenominational Mission Union: "We endorse the Interdenominational School of Missions in New Orleans, a 10-day assembly of women with a common aim. We urge that each auxiliary send one or more representatives the next year".

During this period much emphasis was placed on the importance of the support of Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee. The Conference pledged to take 4,000 shares to be paid in three years, paying \$4,000 per year, making a total of \$12,000 in three years. Each member was urged to take three shares, paying \$1.00 for 3 years. The Council urged participation because of the need for a college where Christian workers could be trained. Later on each conference pledged \$5.00 per member for the enlargement of Scarritt Bible and Training School.

The program of the Woman's Missionary Society continued to grow. St. Mark's Hall reported a new building and MacDonnell Wesley House in Houma also reported a new building.

The slogan for the society continued to be "Pray more, grow more, give more".

The Superintendent of Bible and Mission Study stated in her report: "The missionary spirit does not come by information, but by the Spirit of God. More prayer, closer living to God, and more study of His word will do more to arouse interest in mission study than anything else. Missionary spirit comes from God, knowledge comes from study".

In the ensuing years the membership of the society grew and more funds became available. In 1926 the cornerstone for Scarritt College was laid and it was recommended that an interracial committee be appointed. A request for a full-time rural worker was made and this request became a reality in 1928.

Friendship Homes were established by black Methodist women during this period. The Friendship Home in Cincinnati was the society's only national facility for Negro girls away from home. In the 1920's five conference Friendship Homes were established, including one in Philadelphia. These homes served as the nucleus for many community services supported by the home society with national headquarters in Cincinnati.

The formal opening of Jubilee Inn (Business Girls' Inn in Shreveport) took place in 1928. In 1929 the Woman's Missionary Society of the Louisiana Conference had 334 auxiliaries with a budget of \$53,000.

During the conference held in Ruston April 9-12, 1929 the following resolution was adopted: "The Woman's Missionary Society is to designate one day in each year to be observed by an appropriate program in every auxiliary to acquaint our constituency with the nature and scope of the MacDonnell Community House and the MacDonnell Mission School".

As the women looked back over the past ten years, they knew that progress had been made but their hearts and minds were on the future rather

than on the past.

1930--1940

When 1930 dawned, few people realized that the following years would long be known as the "depression years". The economic condition of the country was uncertain, the stock market had crashed and unemployment was becoming more and more of a reality.

The Woman's Missionary Society met in Lake Charles in March of that year and how was the depression influencing the society? The president made this statement: "Despite depressions in the business world, the Louisiana Conference in per capita gifts for 1929 headed all the conferences. We overpaid our obligations with the exception of Scarritt Maintenance and the Mount Sequoyah Fund". However the time was not too far away when society would be affected by economic troubles.

In 1932 the Conference president stressed a "sacrificial, happy and liberal expenditure of life and that which represents life--wealth, time and personality. Personality is more valuable than money -- prayer, service and an offering are requisites for membership. Who can say which is the most valuable in His sight?" Payments received at that time were 83% of the pledges.

In 1933 the banks were closed by order of the United States president. At the 23rd annual conference held in Baton Rouge there were 165 members of the society present and 75% of the pledges were paid.

At that time members approved the anti-lynching law and it was voted to endorse a resolution of the Parent Teacher Association regarding passage of legislation to pay teachers' salaries and not to shorten school terms, and that funds from special taxes be dedicated to the schools.

The president's message was as follows:
"The concept of Missions has changed -- no longer sending the Gospel to the heathen. Ours is a larger task -- we join with Christians around the world to fight those evils which are damning us all -- ignorance, indifference, prejudice, greed, lawlessness, materialism, Communism, war -- America itself is a mission field. We are forced to give up luxuries, to throw off unessentials, to choose those things which mean the most. Perhaps our gifts have to be smaller, but the success of Woman's work has been in making millions of the mites".

The committee on the Status of Women was created in 1934. Lines of thought of this committee embraced Peace, Prohibition, Citizenship, Interracial Cooperation, Industry, Spiritual Emphasis and Ordination of Women.

Two resolutions were adopted: 1. "That we cultivate a larger and more proportionate representation of women in all places of responsibility in the activity of the Church. 2. That presentation of the trends and of the thinking and activity of women on the various departments of life be made at zone and district meetings".

The annual meeting of the Woman's Missionary Society was held in DeRidder in 1935, which marked a quarter of a century of history of united missionary activity by Methodist Women of Louisiana. A brief history of those twenty-five years was written by Mrs. John B. Pollard.

To commemorate the anniversary of the union of the Home and Foreign Societies a birthday party and luncheon opened the twenty-fifth annual session.

A description of the dining hall was recorded in the minutes: "The dining hall was a bower of spring flowers. Silver caldlesticks holding tall white tapers and a birthday cake bearing twenty-five lighted candles embellished the tables".

In 1936 the annual meeting was held in Alexandria when the Golden Jubilee of Home Missions

was observed. Sincere appreciation was paid to the leaders who had vision to see the need and had the courage to meet that need.

A lengthy report in the minutes of the 1937 session revealed the mission work which was being conducted at Dulac Indian Mission. At that time there were three distinct phases of work: the School, the Church and Social Service.

There were some forty Indian children enrolled in the day school and approximately fifteen in the night school for adults.

The Church, where a local Methodist minister preached, had a membership of about fifty. However, there were more than that who attended. Many of those who came were still members of the Catholic church.

The social service consisted of house-to-house visits, cooperation with the Parish Health Unit and other organizations to provide medical needs.

The work at the Dulac Indian Mission was truly a service of love and dedication for a disadvantaged people.

The 28th Annual Conference in Baton Rouge had for its theme Aldersgate and Missions. This theme comprised the following: "Thoughts toward surrendered lives, deepened spirituality and the work of the Holy Spirit".

The president's message read: "Methodism is leading the world toward unity -- religion must be ecumenical in scope if it battles successfully with other world-wide movements such as dictatorships".

It was during this 1938 session that a number of resolutions were passed, three of which are quoted below.

"Be It Resolved: That all the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, respectfully urge Governor Leche and the members of the Legislature to make state funds as requested by the Louisiana Library Commission available for the estab-

lishment of new libraries and the strengthening of existing libraries for the coming biennium.

"Whereas H. R. 8115 which permits the mailing of small samples of liquor in reality converts the post offices of the United States into distributing stations for liquors in half-pint flasks, is, in our opinion, iniquitous legislation.

"Be It Resolved: Therefore, we, the women of the Louisiana Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, go on record as being unqualifiedly in favor of the ratification of the child labor amendment".

The 1939 meeting was held in Lake Charles and was known as "Unification Session" or "Wedding Day of Methodism". The theme was: "'The Lighted World' -- the light which came from Calvary still shineth in darkness -- darkness of hunger, disease, ignorance, crime and war still cover the earth".

The president spoke of the unification which took place before the end of 1939. In May of that year in Kansas City, Missouri the three branches merged. The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the Methodist Protestant Church became united to be known as The Methodist Church.

1940--1950

1940 dawned and war clouds in Europe were becoming darker and darker.

Church unification had come and along with it a number of changes. One of the important ones was that the Woman's Missionary Society became the Woman's Society of Christian Service. In October 1940, 225 societies of Louisiana had turned in charter certificates with 9,827 charter members. The charter meeting for the Louisiana Conference was called for 2nd and 3rd of October in Alexandria with Bishop Frank Smith presiding. In the new society, Missionary Education, Christian Social Relations and Spiritual Life Cultivation were defined as specific lines of work.

The first annual meeting of the Woman's Society of Christian Service was held at Noel Memorial Church in Shreveport. The theme at that time was: "Christians united in a broken world".

It was only a few months later that the attack on Pearl Harbor came and the life style of Americans had to change.

However, the women of Methodism forged ahead with service, as their past had been. A new organization came into being which many had envisioned for gainfully employed Methodist women who, because of their working schedule, could not attend meetings of the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

The Wesleyan Service Guild of the Louisiana Conference was the answer and another important step in meeting the needs of Methodist women was formed.

The first conference-wide meeting of this group was held August 15, 1943, in Alexandria. The Guild conference executive committee and coaching conference was also held in Alexandria in 1946. A Wesleyan Guild week-end was held at Camp Brewer in 1947. By this time the Guild had grown in membership and their pledge for 1946 was \$42,038.

The first meeting of Central Jurisdiction was held in St. Louis in 1940 when 19 black conferences convened. Mrs. Robert E. Jones (Elizabeth) presided as head of the Provisional Committee. Mrs. J. W. E. Bowen was elected president of the Central Jurisdiction Society.

Two concerns prevailed at that meeting: building fellowship among Central Jurisdiction women and electing black women to the Board of Missions. Of the meeting it was said: "This was the first time in history that black women from the North, South, East and West had come together in the Methodist Church. Many of us were strangers to each other, but during our stay in St. Louis we became acquainted and formed lasting friendships".

The charter meeting of the Central

Jurisdiction of the Woman's Society of Christian Service opened December 9, 1940 in Calvary Methodist Church in Cincinnati, the same city where the Freedmen's Aid Society was established in 1866 and the Woman's Missionary Society in 1880.

Emphasis during the 1940's was placed upon the great need for missionary personnel, the social consciousness, necessity of larger giving and promotion of all plans and goals that would lead to increased membership and spiritual growth.

World War II had come and gone, white and black Methodist women were working for greater consecration, deeper love and toward more earnest endeavor in the decades ahead.

1950-1960

The 1950 years were committed to deeper dedication. The services of St. Mark's were expanded and a camp site was purchased near Covington. It was during this time that the Louisiana Conference realigned the districts, adding Lafayette, which gave a total of eight.

A number of inspirational meetings were held, including the Fourth Assembly in Milwaukee, annual meetings of the Division at Buck Hill Falls and the Brazil General Conference. The conference president visited many of the consecrated workers in different countries. The Missionary movement was growing.

In 1958 Societies numbered 335 and 94 Guilds; the combined giving on pledges was \$113,975.

It was during this period that the Wesleyan Service Guild made a marked advance in the number of Guilds and membership.

In 1958 the theme of the annual conference meeting was "Immortal Tidings in Mortal Hands".

The tidings were told in many ways with much emphasis given to reaching youth.

The district Woman's Societies gave financial support to young people who could attend the Youth Section of the Jurisdictional Board of Missions,

the interest and concern of the women helped fill the Louisiana Youth quota each year.

The Committee on Tours prepared and distributed information on Methodist tours in Louisiana. Later two editions of a booklet, "A Tour with a Purpose", were published. The service of the Tour Committee was broadened to include planning mission tours for youth on a conference-wide basis.

In order to evaluate the work of the Woman's Society and the Wesleyan Service Guild, a pilot study for gathering data was made and challenging information was found. Methodist Church membership in the Louisiana Conference at that time was 43 per cent women and of those only 30 per cent belonged to the Woman's Society or Wesleyan Service Guild.

Projects under the Woman's Division were strengthened by the assignment of a church and community worker to the Alexandria District and by Dulac Indian Mission receiving Week of Prayer and Self Denial funds. Under the name of Dulac Community Center the work in that community was broadened.

The highlights of the work carried on in the late 1950's reveal some tangible results of "Immortal Tidings in Mortal Hands".

1960--1970

It was during this period that Mrs. Glenn Laskey, a former conference president, was made President of the Woman's Division, an honor that had not before come to the Louisiana Conference.

Growth seemed to be the order of the decade. The Wesleyan Service Guild reported 2,174 members in 111 Guilds. Two new Guilds had been organized and three more were in the process of being organized. The Wesleyan Service Guild budget in 1962 was \$17,450.

The 1964-68 quadrennium was a time of intense study and planning throughout The Methodist

Church. Much of this was happening due to the coming union of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church. An interracial committee was appointed, which excluded any reference to the Central Jurisdiction. However, the women of the Central Jurisdiction carried on their work, mindful of a new day ahead. The 28th and last annual meeting of the women of the Central Jurisdiction was held in Nashville, Tennessee, with the theme, "Meeting the Tasks Ahead". The Nashville meeting was filled with anticipation, nostalgia, hope, and a sense of past accomplishment.

The Woman's Division continued financial support for the Wesley Foundation in college towns of the state.

Sager-Brown, which has not before been mentioned, was a project of the Woman's Division. As long ago as 1867 records show that Sager-Brown was home and school for black children. The name of the first school was Gilbert Academy and Industrial College. In 1899 an orphan's home was started on the campus in connection with Gilbert Academy. It was in 1921 that the Woman's Missionary Society took over the orphanage. The home grew and in 1933 was placed with educational institutions, and in 1940 continued operation under the Woman's Division.

In June 1963 the name Sager-Brown was chosen. The school serves children who live in the dormitories and those who attend school from surrounding communities. In the 1960's the enrollment ranged from 150 to 160 pupils with a staff of sixteen persons.

The Woman's Society of Christian Service felt the need of a Town and Country worker whose services would be varied and who should have knowledge of all phases of the church program.

In the 25th anniversary history we find the following notations: "In the summer of 1926 Miss Ora Hooper was stationed in Hammond to do experimental work. After a year at Scarritt College,

she was commissioned as a deaconess and appointed to the Baton Rouge District.

"Another valuable worker was Miss Shelia Nuttall, who gave twelve years to the Lake Charles District and was later in the Monroe and Ruston Districts, before transferring to the Board of Education of the Louisiana Conference to serve as director of children's work.

"Miss Elizabeth Thompson came to Louisiana in 1952 and gave outstanding service with leadership training, especially in the French section of the state.

"In the 1960's Mrs. Martha Overbey began work in the Simmsport-Evergreen area of the Alexandria District. Her work with the Texas-Mexican migrants in the strawberry area of the state was especially effective".

The Business Girls' Inn of Shreveport was another accomplishment made possible by the women of Methodism. Opened on Fannin Street in 1928, many young women found a home within its walls. In 1946 a new home was built on Cotton Street, where it remained a home for young women away from home for many years.

Progress continued in the 1960's, a mission tour comprised of a large number of Woman's Society of Christian Service members of the Louisiana Conference visited Nashville, Tennessee and Washington, D. C. It was during this time that men were to be invited to the Conference School of Missions.

The asking for supply work for 1964-1965 was over \$16,000. Pledges were increased and more interest was shown in conference meetings.

1968 was a year of historical significance when on April 23rd in Dallas, Texas the union of the Evangelical United Brethren and The Methodist Church became a reality.

A name change for the work of Methodist women was in the offing and a merger with the Central Jurisdiction was imminent.

The uniting of the Louisiana Conference of

the Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Women's Society of World Service was held in Brown Chapel on the Centenary campus in July 1978.

In 1969 the first annual meeting was held in Alexandria, Louisiana on March 12th. Miss Dorothy McConnell, editor of World Outlook, was the speaker. A new emblem was adopted for the new organization which was "The Cross and the Flame", symbolizing the Holy Spirit.

The Wesleyan Service Guild selected a task group to work with the Conference B Guild to facilitate the coming merger.

All members in both the Guild and the Woman's Society looked forward to the years ahead. The 1970's were just around the corner.

1970--1979

When 1970 emerged, a challenge faced Methodist women, both black and white. New patterns were emerging and inevitable changes were in the offing.

New Orleans was the scene of the spring 1970 meeting which opened with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Banners which had been made during the year were unusual and meaningful. Dr. Vela Cleveland, a medical missionary from India, was one of the speakers during the meeting. Another speaker was Dr. Lois Miller, Associate General Secretary, Joint Commission on Education and Cultivation of the Board of Missions.

A new Wesleyan Service Guild was organized in the Hammond District on September 21, 1970 at the Elizabeth Sullivan Memorial United Methodist Church in Bogalusa. This comprised 133 members in 9 Guilds.

The fall meeting of the Conference Executive Committee of Louisiana Conference A, Women's Society of Christian Service, was held November 4th and 5th in Alexandria. Committee members welcomed Miss Ethel Alston, president of Conference B, Women's Society of Christian Service.

The committee on nominations of Conference A and Conference B started working together in order that the slate of officers presented at the merger meeting would represent both Conferences.

During the Annual Conference in Monroe in 1972, Mrs. Wiley B. Gardner gave the memorial service in memory of Mrs. Thomas E. Kirkpatrick, conference president, who had recently passed away. Two other former conference presidents, Mrs. J. B. Pollard and Mrs. L. B. Kilpatrick had passed away since the last annual meeting.

An important resolution was passed during that meeting, which resolution stated that the Women's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild begin working toward the formation of the new organization which would be known as "United Methodist Women". All local Societies and Guilds were to be organized by the end of 1973.

During those years emphasis was placed on the importance of each local unit using 75% of its total budget for missions.

A highlight of the 70's was the merger ceremony held at Annual Conference on June 1, 1972 in the Gold Dome Stadium on Centenary College campus. Following the merger, delegates were elected to attend the 1972 General Conference in Atlanta, Georgia and the Jurisdictional Conference in Houston. Conference A and Conference B were no longer, they became the Louisiana Conference. United Methodist Women of this Conference were attending "Human Rights seminars", "United Methodist assembly", "General Conference meetings", "International Year of the Child" and many other meetings which proved beneficial to members of all units.

139 members of the United Methodist Women of Louisiana attended the United Methodist Women's assembly in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Louisiana Conference of United

Methodist Women ratified and reaffirmed the "New Charter for Racial Policies".

It was a time of change and reorganization. The Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Hammond and Lafayette Districts were to be realigned.

The Wesleyan Service Guild paper, "Guild Times", which was widely read, became the "Christian Service Times". Later the "Christian Service Times" was discontinued.

All branches of women's work in The Louisiana Conference were now united into one - United Methodist Women.

As this goes to the printer, women all over the conference are looking forward to the 1979 annual meeting at First United Methodist Church in Shreveport. At this time we will be celebrating one hundred years as organized Methodist women.

These are the words of one member of the Conference committee: "There is no desire to return to the past. We look backward only to see the future clearly".

- NOTES -



